



# A PARADIGM SHIFT IN PRE SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Professional preparation and professional development of teachers is a continuous process. It begins with the selection of an aspirant teacher and includes his initial preparation induction into the profession and his continuous development throughout his teaching carrier. The system of teacher preparation has come under considerable pressure as a result of the expansion and growth of school education, through efforts to universalize elementary education. Presently, the education of teacher educators takes place mainly through the well-entrenched two-year teacher trainee programme. It is a promising development that the education of teacher educators has been acknowledged as a major issue in teacher education and academic bodies have addressed themselves to the task of curriculum renewal. This is evident in the different models of teacher trainee programme that have been proposed by individual universities and innovative programmes of teacher preparation launched by some institutions. The concern to make the teacher trainee programme a focussed learning encounter rather than a general study of education is clearly visible. The need for professional rigour, relevance of content, emphasis on research related skills are also appreciated. These concerns demanded that out of the box to think in addressing the issue of new programme designs for the education and training of teacher educators. Keeping these vital ingredients in teacher education programme, the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has prepared the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education. Reform of teacher education to move forward on a sound footing demands dedicated research in the area of foundations of education in the Indian context by universities, preferably in independently established departments. The research in such departments would help develop the teacher education programmes on a sound theoretical basis.

**KEYWORDS:** Paradigm shift, Pre Service, Teacher Education.

## INTRODUCTION:

Pre-service education of teacher means, education of teachers before they enter into service as teacher. During this period of teacher education programmes, teaching practice goes side by side, while they are getting knowledge about theory papers pre service is carried on for preparing different type of teachers. These programmes are intended to support and enhance teacher learning inculcate in them a greater degree of self confidence. Professional preparation and professional development of teachers is a continuous process. It begins with the selection of an aspirant teacher and includes his initial preparation induction into the profession and his continuous development throughout his teaching carrier. The formulation of policy and design of teacher preparation and continuing professional development should optimally take into account the whole spectrum of teacher learning. It is important for teacher educators to learn the methodology of how to get in touch with the core qualities of a good teacher and how they can stimulate these qualities in student teachers. This will lead to a deeper involvement in learning process of teacher educators as well as student teachers. The inclusion of appropriate content knowledge about essential qualities of a good teacher in relevant theory papers and practice of effective domain related traits in school situation for a longer duration could help promote these traits in student teachers.

The well established tradition of teaching and learning in India has retained its inherent strength even under adverse circumstances. The post –independence period was characterized by major efforts being made to nurture and transform teacher education. The system of teacher preparation has come under considerable pressure as a result of the expansion and growth of school education, through efforts to universalize elementary education. Having inherited a foreign model of teacher preparation at the time of independence from Britain in 1947, major efforts have been made to adapt and update the teacher education curriculum to local needs, to make it more contexts based, responsive and dynamic with regard to best meeting the particular needs of India. The current system of teacher education is supported by a network of national, provincial and district level resource institutions working together to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs at the pre service level. The changing role of teachers and the changing definitions of teacher effectiveness have been increasingly studied and analysed, with research undertaken and the outcomes being feedback into the system to facilitate the process of education reform. The current focus of researchers, policy makers and practitioners with regard to teacher education is on the development of professional competencies, and on the most effective ways of achieving higher levels of commitment and motivation for higher level performance on the part of teachers. In addition, important possibilities are arising with regard to current developments involving the new information and communication technologies. As a result, teacher education in India is on the brink of a major transformation.

The Teacher Education Policy in India has evolved over time and is based on recommendations contained in various Reports of Committees/Commissions on

Education, the important ones being the Kothari Commission (1966), the Chattopadhyay Committee (1985), the National Policy on Education (NPE 1986/92), Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990), Yashpal Committee (1993), and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operational from 1st April, 2010, has important implications for teacher education in the country.

## LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK:

Within the federal structure of the country, while broad policy and legal framework on teacher education is provided by the Central Government, implementation of various programmes and schemes are undertaken largely by state governments. For pre-service training, the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body of the Central Government, is responsible for planned and coordinated development of teacher education in the country. The NCTE lays down norms and standards for various teacher education courses, minimum qualifications for teacher educators, course and content and duration and minimum qualification for entry of student-teachers for the various courses. It also grants recognition to institutions (government, government-aided and self-financing) interested in undertaking such courses and has in-built mechanism to regulate and monitor their standards and quality.

## FINANCING OF PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES:

For pre-service training, the government and government-aided teacher education institutions are financially supported by the respective State Governments. Further, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education, the Central Government also supports over 650 institutions, including the DIETs, CTEs and the IASEs.

Implications on Teacher Education of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has implications on the present teacher education system and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. The Act inter alia provides that:

- The Central Government shall develop and enforce standards for training of teachers;
- Persons possessing minimum qualifications, as prescribed by an academic authority authorised by the Central Government, shall be eligible to be employed as teachers;
- Existing teachers not possessing such prescribed qualifications would be required to acquire that qualification within a period of 5 years.
- The Government must ensure that the Pupil-Teacher Ratio specified in

the Schedule is maintained in each school

- Vacancy of a teacher in a school, established, owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government, shall not exceed 10% of the sanctioned strength.

### NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK ON TEACHER EDUCATION:

The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has prepared the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education, which was circulated in March 2009. This Framework has been prepared in the background of the NCF, 2005 and the principles laid down in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which necessitated an altered framework on Teacher Education which would be consistent with the changed philosophy of school curriculum recommended in the NCF, 2005. While articulating the vision of teacher education, the Framework has some important dimensions of the new approach to teacher education, as under:

- Reflective practice to be the central aim of teacher education;
- Student-teachers should be provided opportunities for self-learning, reflection, assimilation and articulation of new ideas;
- Developing capacities for self-directed learning and ability to think, be critical and to work in groups.
- Providing opportunities to student-teachers to observe and engage with children, communicate with and relate to children. The Framework has highlighted the focus, specific objectives, broad areas of study in terms of theoretical and practical learning's, and curricular transaction and assessment strategies for the various initial teacher education programmes. The draft also outlines the basic issues that should guide formulation of all programmes of these courses. The Framework has made several recommendations on the approach and methodology of in-service teacher training programmes and has also outlined a strategy for implementation of the Framework. As a natural corollary to the NCFTE, the NCTE has also developed 'model' syllabi for various teacher education courses.

### REFORMS IN REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was constituted under the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 for achieving planning and coordinated development of teacher education in the country, for regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system. In the recent past the NCTE has undertaken various steps for systemic improvements in its functioning and in improving the teacher education system, as under:

- Based on the study of demand and supply of teachers and teacher educators of the various states, the NCTE has decided not to receive further applications for several teacher education courses in respect of 13 States. This has led to substantial rationalisation in the demand-supply situation across States;
- The Regulations for grant of recognition and norms and standards for various teacher education courses were revised and notified on 31st August, 2009. The applications for grant of recognition are now processed strictly in chronological order. The new Regulations make the system more transparent, expedient and time bound, with reduction in discretionary powers of the Regional Committees;
- E-Governance system has been introduced by way of providing online facility for furnishing of applications and online payment of fees. MIS has been developed to streamline the process of recognition;
- The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education has been developed keeping in view NCF, 2005;
- Academic support is being provided through preparation of Manual for the teacher education institutions and publication and dissemination of Thematic Papers on Teacher Education.
- Various quality control mechanisms have been developed, including re-composition of the Visiting Teams, periodical monitoring of the teacher education institutions and de-recognition of institutions not conforming to the Norms and Standards prescribed by the NCTE.

### PREPARATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS – FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES:

Presently, the education of teacher educators takes place mainly through the well-entrenched two-year teacher trainee programme. It is a promising development that the education of teacher educators has been acknowledged as a major issue in teacher education and academic bodies have addressed themselves to the task of curriculum renewal. This is evident in the different models of teacher trainee programme. that have been proposed by individual universities and inno-

vative programmes of teacher preparation launched by some institutions. The concern to make the teacher trainee programme a focussed learning encounter rather than a general study of education is clearly visible. The need for professional rigour, relevance of content, emphasis on research related skills are also appreciated. These concerns demand that we think out of the box in addressing the issue of new programme designs for the education and training of teacher educators. The following recommendations deserve serious consideration in addressing these concerns:

- Mechanisms need to be evolved to promote the entry of talent in teacher education programmes.
- Vertical linkages for post-graduate studies in education, including research programmes for students from a variety of science and social science disciplines need to be provided.
- Integrated models of teacher education of four or five years' duration could comprise of core components that would be common to all teacher education programmes (pre-primary, elementary, secondary and senior secondary) followed by specialization of professional development, specific to the stage of education.
- Specialization at the post-graduation level in science education, language education, social sciences education and mathematics education need to be developed.

The distinction between education as a liberal study and education as a professional preparation needs to be appreciated and post-graduate programme design should take this into consideration. Proposals for the comprehensive reform of teacher education include integrated programmes of teacher education as the way forward; forging critical links between school education and universities; providing for diversification of specializations at the post-graduate level and providing for diverse routes for undergraduate students to pursue higher studies in education.

### CONCLUSION:

Reform of teacher education to move forward on a sound footing demands dedicated research in the area of foundations of education in the Indian context by universities, preferably in independently established departments. The research in such departments would help develop the teacher education programmes on a sounder theoretical basis. The existing departments of education have hardly been able to engage themselves in this long-pending need for their pre-occupation in conducting routine teacher training and research programmes. According to Kothari commission, a teacher who unlike an ordinary worker, acts as a master, craft man, an artist, a strategist and a powerful motivator. The environs of a classroom are enlivened by the inspiring, dynamic, enthusiastic, encouraging, skilful and dedicated teacher. It is he who shapes the destiny of students and that of the future citizens who eventually shape the destiny of the country. Such a teacher only can successfully in culture among children values that strengthen the ideals of social justice, equity, secularism and pluralism.

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